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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/688,423	10/16/2003	Stephen Loomis	AOL00111	2234

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EXAMINER
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FLANDERS, ANDREW C

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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2615

DATE MAILED: 08/22/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

<b>Office Action Summary</b>	<b>Application No.</b>	<b>Applicant(s)</b>	
	10/688,423	LOOMIS, STEPHEN	
	<b>Examiner</b>	<b>Art Unit</b>	
	Andrew C. Flanders	2615	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --  
**Period for Reply**

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

**Status**

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 22 June 2006.
- 2a) ☐ This action is FINAL.                      2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

**Disposition of Claims**

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-32 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-32 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

**Application Papers**

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on \_\_\_\_\_ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.  
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

**Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119**

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All    b) ☐ Some \* c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- \* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

**Attachment(s)**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)                        | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)                     |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)    | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____  |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____   | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____                                    |

## **DETAILED ACTION**

### ***Continued Examination Under 37 CFR 1.114***

A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on 22 June 2006 has been entered.

### ***Response to Arguments***

Applicant's arguments with respect to the claims have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

### ***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112***

The following is a quotation of the first paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall contain a written description of the invention, and of the manner and process of making and using it, in such full, clear, concise, and exact terms as to enable any person skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and use the same and shall set forth the best mode contemplated by the inventor of carrying out his invention.

**Claim 26** is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the written description requirement. The claim(s) contains subject matter which was not described in the specification in such a way as to reasonably convey to one skilled in the relevant art that the inventor(s), at the time the application was filed, had possession of the claimed invention. The portions cited in Applicant's remarks as to provide support in the specification for the subject matter of claim 26 do not disclose any specification by a user. Fig. 1B merely shows the environment in which the invention operates; Fig. 2C shows the natural flow of the play list; p7 lines 10-11 discloses a command that does not require a user input; p2 lines 13-14 provides a description of Fig. 2B; p5 lines 18-20 discloses the client computer receiving a play list without any user specification; p6 lines 13-15 discloses reasons for pre buffering without any user specification.

**Claim 29** is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the written description requirement. The claim(s) contains subject matter which was not described in the specification in such a way as to reasonably convey to one skilled in the relevant art that the inventor(s), at the time the application was filed, had possession of the claimed invention. The portions cited in Applicant's remarks as to provide support in the specification for the subject matter of claim 29 do not disclose any configurable period of time; merely that the period of time is 10 seconds in the preferred embodiment.

Art Unit: 2615

The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

**Claim 30** rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

**Claim 30** claims where said number of songs comprises a number of videos. The specification provides details that the system can be used for both audio clips and video clips. However, there is insufficient description as to how a number of songs can comprise a number of videos rendering the limitation indefinite.

### ***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103***

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 1 – 25 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Berman (U.S. Patent 6,502,194) in view of Zainoulline (U.S. Patent Application Publication 2001/0030660) and in further view of Kumagi (U.S. Patent

**Regarding Claims 1 and 16,**

Berman discloses:

An apparatus for smoothly playing a pre-determined sequence of songs transmitted from a server over the internet (Fig. 1 element 100) comprising a processor (Fig. 1 element 118), a first memory that stores at least one program used by said processor to control the playing of the sequence of songs (col. 4 lines 54 – 57),

wherein said at least one program causes said processor at least to:

as soon as a song starts to play, start to download, consecutively, a first small portion of a number of songs which are, in the predetermined sequence, subsequent to the song playing in an alternating fashion, said downloaded small portions being pre-cached in a different buffer with is an area in said memory (i.e. as the first song (Song 1) is being played, the playback unit continues to operate and, in background operations, continues to download the Song 1 data into the first buffer, and also downloads data for the other selected songs into the other buffers in an alternating fashion. Each song will be placed into a different sequential buffer; col. 12 lines 10 – 16);

as soon as the user skips to a target song whose first small portion has been pre-cached, start to play the first small portion of said target song (i.e. this ensures that

Art Unit: 2615

some portion of each selected song will be downloaded and available as soon as possible, thereby permitting the user to skip to one of the other selected songs after playback has begun; col. 12 lines 16 – 19) ;

wherein as soon as said target song starts to play, deleting any pre-cached song prior to said target song in said pre-determined sequence (Berman discloses data in a given buffer is overwritten as it is processed and played. Thus, after the last segment of memory in a buffer for a song has been filled with a song data packet and that buffer is processed for listening, the next song data packet will be written to the first segment in that buffer; col. 12 lines 25 – 30. Therefore, as the system starts downloading the rest of the said target song, it is inherent that the data that has been in the buffer prior to the target song is overwritten; i.e. deleted); and

and at the same time start to download the rest of said target song so that as soon as the playing of the first small portion of said target song ends, start to play the rest of said target song which is being downloaded from the server over the internet (i.e. this ensures that some portion of each selected song will be downloaded and available as soon as possible, thereby permitting the user to skip to one of the other selected songs after playback has begun; col. 12 lines 16 – 19)

Berman does not explicitly disclose; or the buffers are in an area in said second memory; or wherein the playtime of said downloaded first small portion is limited to comply with royalty requirements.

Zainouline discloses a preview device having a CPU, RAM memory, and staging memory (page 3 paragraph 0031)

Applying this staging memory to store the music data in Berman instead of Berman's only memory reads upon the limitation of a second memory which is available to said at least one program for operations and the buffers are in an area in said second memory.

One of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention would have been motivated to use Zainoulline's preview device with Berman's Memory Buffering Control playback method in order to create a more pleasing online shopping experience. Rather than a user having to wait for each individual song to buffer as they skip between preview clips, the combination would allow a user to smoothly switch between media clips thereby saving the user time and avoiding annoying pauses between playback (Zainoulline paragraph 26).

The combination fails to explicitly disclose wherein playtime of said downloaded first small portion is limited to comply with royalty requirements.

Kumagai discloses:

In other words, for example, if a user purchases and downloads certain contents data of only one tune, then a trade regarding provision of the contents data through downloading is performed. It is to be noted that, in the form of "purchase per download", the number of playback times, the playback period or the like is sometimes restricted depending upon the intention of the proprietor of the copyright or the like (paragraph 4).



Applying this teaching to the combination reads upon the limitation of wherein playtime of said downloaded first small portion is limited to comply with royalty requirements.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to apply these teachings to the combination. As is notoriously well known in the art, copyright infringement in digital music is a significant problem. Avoiding this would be desirable; i.e. it is desirable it restrict playback depending upon the intention of the proprietor of the copyright or the like; paragraph 4 of Kumagai.

Regarding **Claim 6**, in addition to the elements stated above regarding claim 1, the combination further discloses:

wherein said number of songs is maintained at a single positive integer (i.e. songs 1, 2 and 3 in the example of Berman)

Regarding **Claims 2, 12 and 22**, in addition to the elements above regarding claim 1, the combination further discloses

wherein said first small portion is approximately the data required for playing the first ten seconds (in Berman in the preferred embodiment each data packet contains approximately ten seconds of compressed digital audio information; col. 11 lines 50 – 52).

Regarding **Claim 3, 13, and 23**, in addition to the elements above regarding claim 1, the combination further discloses:

Berman discloses three buffers in a playback memory in Figure 11. The playback unit memory may be segregated into a number of sequential buffers, with each buffer preferably containing one song (col. 11 lines 30 – 32) and the number of buffers is determined by the 2MB buffer size and the amount of memory that the playback unit microprocessor can access, so the number of buffers available will be variable (col. 11 lines 34 –38). Since microprocessor accessible memories of, for example, 256 MB, are well known at the time of the invention, Berman's disclosure comprehends any number of buffers up to at least 128.

Regarding **Claims 4, 14, and 24**, in addition to the elements stated above regarding claim 1, the combination further discloses:

Berman further discloses that the buffers correspond to the following musical selections (col. 11 lines 63 – 65) and that the buffers are sequential buffers (col. 11 line 31). Berman discloses that the buffers correspond to the following musical selections as well as hold the data of the following songs to be played in sequential order. Therefore it is inherent that the said number of songs is all songs subsequent to the song in playing.

Regarding **Claims 5, 15, and 25**, in addition to the elements stated above regarding claim 1, the combination further discloses:

wherein said buffer follows a first-in first-out algorithm and allows writing while reading (i.e. Berman further discloses The loop buffering operation progresses from left to right in Fig 12. Loop buffering is used to limit the size needed for each buffer. In particular, a buffer is not expected to have sufficient capacity to contain the entire data needed for one song. Rather data in a given buffer is overwritten as it is processed and played. Thus, after the last segment of memory in a buffer for a song has been filled with a song data packet and that buffer is processed for listening, the next song data packet will be written to the first segment in that buffer; col. 12 lines 22 – 30)

Regarding **Claims 7 and 17**, in addition to the elements stated above regarding claims 6 and 16 the combination further discloses:

as soon as the user skips from a song in the playing to a target song, checking whether a file for said target song exists in said buffer, wherein if the check result is yes, continuing on step (d); (d) playing the first small portion of said target song (i.e. Berman further discloses checking to see if the track is in the buffer and if so beginning to stream track data from memory; Fig. 5 elements 506 and 512).

As stated above regarding claim 1, Berman discloses data in a given buffer is overwritten as it is processed and played. Thus, after the last segment of memory in a buffer for a song has been filled with a song data packet and that buffer is processed for listening, the next song data packet will be written to the first segment in that buffer (col. 12 lines 25 – 30). Therefore, as the system starts downloading the rest of the said target song, it is inherent that the data that has been in the buffer prior to the target

Art Unit: 2615

song is overwritten (i.e. deleted) as the newer data is being processed and played. This reads upon the limitation of deleting any pre-cached song prior to said target song in said pre-determined sequence. Elements (e) and (g) are clearly comprehended above regarding claim 1.

Regarding **Claims 8 and 18**, in addition to the elements stated above regarding claims 7 and 17, the combination further discloses:

as soon as step (d) starts, continuing on step (a), wherein if one or more songs subsequent to said target song are already pre-cached, skipping said one or more songs and downloading the subsequent ones, executively, to make up said number.

Berman discloses that portions of each selected song will be downloaded as the first one begins to play (col. 11 lines 56 and 57), the number of buffers may be variable (col. 11 lines 37 and 38), this ensures that some portion of each selected song will be downloaded and available as soon as possible, thereby permitting the user to skip to one of the other selected songs after playback has begun (col.12 lines 16 – 19), and as the first song (Song 1) is being played, the playback unit continues to operate and, in background operations, continues to download the Song 1 data into the first buffer, and also downloads data for the other selected songs into the other buffers in an alternating fashion. Each song will be placed into a different sequential buffer. (col.12 lines 10 – 16). It is inherent that as soon as the user skips ahead to another song, the subsequent songs will be downloaded into the buffer sequentially in order to fill the number of

Art Unit: 2615

buffers; thus the above paragraph shows why the combination reads upon the claimed limitations.

Regarding **Claims 9 and 19**, in addition to the elements stated above regarding claims 8 and 18, the combination further discloses:

if no skip command is given by the user while said target song is playing, as soon as the playing of said target song ends, playing the next song immediately subsequent to said target song

Berman further discloses that if a user wants to hear Song1, Song2, and Song 3, the playback unit downloads a number of packets for Song1 into the first available buffer, Once a sizeable amount of compressed audio information is stored for that song, the playback unit begins to process the information and play the song (col.11 lines 66 and 67, col. 12 lines 1-4). It is inherent that if the user selects these three songs, starts playing Song1, and doesn't skip ahead that Song 2 will follow after Song1 has completed playing based on the functionality of the buffer; thus the above paragraph shows why the combination reads upon the claimed limitations.

Element (j) is clearly comprehended above regarding claim 7 and thus claims 9 and 19 are rejected.

Regarding **Claims 10 and 20**, in addition to the elements stated above regarding claims 7 and 17, the combination further discloses:

. sending request to stop transmitting of said song in playing and start transmitting said target song and playing said target song while being downloaded as soon as said buffer allows so

Berman discloses that As the first song (Song 1 is being played, the playback unit continues to operate and, in background operation, continues to download the Song 1 data into the first buffer, and also downloads data for the other selected songs in to the other buffers into an alternating fashion (col. 12 lines 10 – 14) and if a user wants to hear Song1, Song2, and Song 3, the playback unit downloads a number of packets for Song1 into the first available buffer, Once a sizeable amount of compressed audio information is stored for that song, the playback unit begins to process the information and play the song (col.11 lines 66 and 67, col. 12 lines 1-4). Therefore, if a user starts playing Song1 and instantly skips to Song2 there will be no information stored in the buffer for Song2 therefore it is inherent that the system will stop playing Song 1 and automatically download the information for Song2; thus the above paragraph shows why the combination reads upon the claimed limitations.

Elements (l), (m), and (o) are clearly comprehended above regarding claim 7 and thus claims 10 and 20 are rejected.

Regarding **Claims 11 and 21**, in addition to the elements stated above regarding claims 10 and 20, element (p) is clearly comprehended above regarding claim 9 element (j), element (q) is clearly comprehended above regarding claim 9 element (i), element (r) is clearly comprehended above regarding claim 7 element (e), element (s) is

clearly comprehended above regarding claim 8 element (h), and element (t) is clearly comprehended above regarding claim 7 element (g) and thus claims 11 and 21 are rejected.

Regarding **Claim 26**, in addition to the elements stated above regarding claim 1, the combination further discloses:

wherein said number of songs that are cashed and length of said first small portion are specified by a user (i.e. the user wants to hear songs 1, 2 and 3; col. 11 lines 65 – 67; additionally, the length of the buffer is set by the program in the memory. This setting does not differ in that described by Applicant in the specification; particularly page 7 as pointed out in Applicant's remarks. Berman's system requires the buffers to be set in memory and thus it must be done by the software program discloses; just as Applicant discloses).

Regarding **Claim 27**, in addition to the elements stated above regarding claim 1, the combination further discloses:

wherein said length of said first small portion and said number of songs are configurable in a function (i.e. the user wants to hear songs 1, 2 and 3; col. 11 lines 65 – 67; additionally, the length of the buffer is set by the program in the memory. This setting does not differ in that described by Applicant in the specification; particularly page 7 as pointed out in Applicant's remarks. Berman's system requires the buffers to be set in memory and thus it must be done by the software program discloses; just as

Applicant discloses. Since the software is written for the system there must be some level of configurability).

Regarding **Claim 28**, in addition to the elements stated above regarding claim 1, the combination further discloses:

a function to close and remove all of said first small portion of each of said number of songs (i.e. the user has no permanent copy of the audio material; col. 6 lines 25 – 28; which at least suggests that the songs pre buffered will be removed).

Regarding **Claim 29**, in addition to the elements stated above regarding claim 6, the combination further discloses:

a function to maintain skipped pre-buffered data for a configurable period of time, wherein after said period of time said skipped pre-buffered data is deleted (i.e. the pre-buffered data in Berman is kept while the user is playing various data; this at least meets the limitation of configurable as when the user changes playback, data is either overwritten or not depending on the state).

Regarding **Claim 30**, in addition to the elements stated above regarding claim 1, the combination further discloses:

where said number of songs comprises a number of videos (Zainouline discloses that the playback data may be video; abstract).



Regarding **Claim 31**, in addition to the elements stated above regarding claims 1 and 6, the combination further discloses that the device may playback video media (Zainoulline abstract) as well as audio media thus meeting the limitations of claim 31 in addition to what is stated in claim 1.

Regarding **Claim 32**, in addition to the elements stated above regarding claim 31, the combination further discloses:

a user controlling said pre-determined sequence of videos (col. 11 lines 65-67 in Berman; and videos in Zainoulline abstract) using a graphical user interface (graphical user interface in Zainoulline's abstract)


### ***Conclusion***

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Andrew C. Flanders whose telephone number is (571) 272-7516. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 8:30 - 5:00.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Sinh Tran can be reached on (571) 272-7546. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

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